

# Overflow: Sidebars

## MENDOCINO'S LOGISTICAL CHALLENGE

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Guard troops.

Another Incident Base is established at the Fort Bragg Forest Fire Station/Jackson State Demonstration Forest headquarters to cover the north coast fires. Since timber companies are taking action on fires on their properties, this base does not support large numbers of agency firefighters, and is able to use existing facilities.

At Laytonville, logistics are more difficult. This small community, in north-central Mendocino County has limited facilities and can not support the hundreds of firefighters for several weeks. A good old fashioned "fire camp" is

set up in a pasture across the highway from the Laytonville Forest Fire Station. The pasture is available, the rancher was willing, but the water and phone lines were on the wrong side of the highway. Some flexible pipe and telephone lines were laid alongside U.S. 101 to a strategically-located culvert, under the highway, and into the rapidly developing tent city.

Covelo, a small town in remote northeastern Mendocino County, also lacks facilities to support large numbers of firefighters. Fortunately, the Covelo FFS is situated on a large piece of land and is an old style CAL FIRE station, with large barracks, mess

hall capacity, and a big restaurant-size Wolf cooking range. A Ukiah restaurateur with a reputation for catering large events provided hot meals.

At the Ukiah fairground, the incident base, supplemented by a kitchen trailer and a communications trailer, had adequate facilities to support the Incident Command Team, plus the Ukiah and Willits branches of the fire operations. They were the "point of distribution" for everything that it would take to keep fire operations going countywide for several weeks. Crews from the California Conservation Corps ran the

Supply Units at the Booneville and Laytonville bases, and stockpiled and dispensed everything from drinking water to sleeping bags. Each operational period, "circuit riders" from Ukiah made the rounds of the branch base camps, distributing everything from copies of the Incident Action Plan, to news releases and maps for community bulletin boards, to hose, fuses, and MREs.

This logistical effort is sustained for six weeks, until all of the Mendocino Unit's 129 lightning fires had been contained at a total of 53,300 acres.

## WHEN 911 CALLS YOU

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more than 10% of their population is Spanish-speaking. These systems improve the safety of evacuations by getting notice to people sooner, and reducing the

risks taken by emergency personnel. "In the 1999 wildfires, several of our emergency vehicles had to drive through flames to go door to door," said Joy Willis of

Shasta County's communications center, recalling a time when they didn't have "Reverse 911" systems. It doesn't mean emergency responders won't go into the

neighborhoods; it just means they will be able to time it better."

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## WORK/REST GUIDELINES

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Although it remains critically important for managers and supervisors to ensure appropriate rest is provided.

### Assignment Duration

Both the state and federal standard length of assignment is 14 days. For the federal government an assignment is defined as the time period between first full operational period at the reporting location

stated on the resource order and the commencement of travel to return to home unit.

For the state of California, an assignment is considered from time of departure from the home unit to the return to the home unit. This is often referred to as “portal-to-portal”.

For the federal government, after a 14-day assignment (exclusive of travel), two days off is

mandatory. However, there is flexibility to extend assignments up to an additional 14 days beyond the standard 14 days when life and property are imminently threatened, suppression objectives are close to being met, a military battalion is assigned, or replacement resources are unavailable or have not arrived. When there is an extension, the mandatory two days off must be provided prior to

the 22nd day of the assignment.

While CAL FIRE resources also have standard 14-day assignments, the length of an assignment can be extended under exceptional circumstances. For example, in response to the 2008 fire siege, CAL FIRE authorized an increased length of assignment up to 21 days, with a 48-hour rest period prior to being released from an incident.

## NATIVE AMERICAN SITES

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If there is Native American presence within an area, tribal representatives coordinate with the incident management teams to mitigate suppression impacts. Mitigation strategies include locating hand lines well outside the area of concern or letting the fire burn through it. Due to threat of vandalism and desecration, the tribes and the Forest Service do not disclose exact locations of cultural sites.

On the Blue 2 Fire, Siskiyou Complex, Ukonom Complex, and Carey Fire, incident management teams report that one of their primary concerns is protecting extremely important cultural sites. However, major traditional spiritual activities are expected within some of these fire areas adding yet another level of complexity as teams have only limited knowledge of exactly where these activities were to occur and how many people are

expected to be involved. Cultural leaders within the Yurok and Karuk Tribes express the need for better adherence to agreed upon fire management procedures and on-site consultation for culturally sensitive areas. Cultural leaders in the Hoopa Tribe request long term analysis of where the Carey Fire will spread and establishment of trigger points when they will be consulted on fire suppression actions.

Meanwhile active fire conditions heightened widespread public concern, requiring new tactics to be considered, which in turn increased concerns with tribal representatives.

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## RESPONSES TO SMOKE IMPACTS

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President's emergency declaration, allowing reimbursement for emergency response costs.

The 2008 fire siege keeps many Air Quality Districts busy anticipating smoke impacts and responding to air quality concerns. The district keeps residents informed of current and projected smoke levels, allowing them to take "appropriate actions to protect themselves.

Combined particulate emissions from fires affecting the Monterey

Unified Air Quality Pollution Control District are estimated to be over 20,000 tons, with peak daily emissions near 1,000 tons (10 times that from non-wildfire sources). The District issues 31 public health smoke advisories, responds to citizen phone calls, and targets reverse calls to impacted areas.

In Shasta County, 20 days of unhealthy air quality are recorded during July at a monitoring station in Anderson (10 unhealthy for sensitive groups,

seven unhealthy for all, three very unhealthy for all).

Siskiyou County reports adverse air quality for Fort Jones, Happy Camp, Weed and Yreka. Happy Camp has 16 days exceeding the air quality standard in July and 17 days in August. Weed is the least impacted location monitored in the county, with seven days exceeding the air quality standard in July, and three in August.

Prevailing winds in Mendocino County "pool" the smoke from

large fires into the Ukiah, Redwood, and Potter Valleys.

As the heavy smoke persists for many days, it creates unhealthy conditions over a large area. The greatest health risk to the young, old, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Smoke impacts during this siege emphasize the need for improved air quality monitoring and community strategies to better prepare us for when fires return to burn for many days again.

## INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE: AUSSIES, KIWIS, AND CANUCKS

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Mexico assisted on Southern California fires.

Wildland firefighting operations have truly taken on an international flavor.

## ILLEGAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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On the Soda Complex, armed pot farm guards kept firefighters at bay for several days, preventing suppression actions.

Not only do the armed guards of these illegal operations present a danger to firefighters and others, the chemicals and trash generated by growers and left on

site represent a significant environmental hazard. The federal land management agencies have insufficient funding to disrupt these

operations and our public lands continue to be used to grow marijuana

## RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

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undertaken by private timberland owners to begin immediate salvage logging of damaged

timber stands, and make repairs to logging roads and bridges.

In all cases, the SEAT and BAER

teams closely coordinate efforts with each other, appropriate local agencies, and private landowners

ensuring continuity of operations across property boundaries and achieving economies of scale.

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## CNG (CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD) ASSETS BATTLE WILDFIRES

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ground elements from the CNG to respond as part of the Operation Lightning Strikes firefighting effort. The team is a component of the 649th Engineering Company from Red Bluff, and brings eight transports, eight specially modified

bulldozers, and 32 people.

Dozers receive roll cages to protect operators in case the dozer should turn over while operating in hazardous terrain, and fire curtains to shield soldiers from the heat and flying embers. Equipment receives thorough

maintenance checks. All bolts and nuts are tightened; tires are rotated, repaired, or replaced; and engines are inspected and serviced.

Finally, the soldiers receive fire retardant uniforms.

The dozers are used to create fire breaks, removing combustible material and building a barrier of dirt so the fire has no fuel to burn. It is the first time that the 649th has been tasked with fighting wildfires.

## JOINT INFORMATION CENTERS

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multiple fires managed by multiple teams. This provides current information to the numerous communities affected by the large number of fires.

## HOOVER CABIN

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Salmon River.

During the fires, several other cabins in this area are wrapped with a fire resistant shielding to assist in their protection. This fire resistant structure-wrap is a

light-weight, aluminized, coated material similar to that used for fire shelters. Designed to reflect 95% of radiant heat, it is capable of withstanding temperatures of 1,000 F for 10-15 minutes and

3000 F for approximately 30 minutes. Light-weight and easy to install, fire fighters have used the wrap to protect structures, bridges, and telephone poles for 5 to 6 years. It is available

commercially to the public.

Fire fighter efforts successfully protect the historic structures at Wooley Camp.

# Overflow: Complexes

## Alps Complex

<b>Affected Communities:</b> Brooks Ranch, Buckhorn Ranch, Denny	<b>Start Report Date:</b> 6/21/08 9:28 AM	separate reporting -- see Iron Complex; 4,139 acres per Iron Complex	100
<b>Agencies in Command:</b> USFS	<b>Containment Date:</b> Unknown - Final report 7/11/08 when fires @ 90% containment	<b>Direct Fire Suppression Costs:</b> 9/4 \$1,991,000 per Iron/Alps 209	<b>Structures Destroyed:</b> 0
<b>Teams Assigned:</b> Great Basin Team (T1) – see Iron Complex for additional teams	<b>Total Acres:</b> 1218 ac @ end of	<b>Firefighters Assigned at Peak:</b>	<b>Structures Damaged:</b> 0
			<b>Fuels:</b> Timber with brush
			<b>Cause:</b> lightning

## American River Complex

affects air quality from Sacramento to Reno.

On July 15 the complex is at 18,799 acres and 50% contained. The Peavine fire is contained at 551 acres. Favorable weather and topographic alignment allow crews to continue to making effective suppression

actions on the Government Springs/Westville fire. California National Guard task force “Shovel” joins the fire fighting on July 12.

The American River Complex was reported contained as of 7/30/2008 at 6:00 PM.

## Indians Fire / Basin Complex

made major runs to the south and north. A mandatory evacuation and road closure is in effect for the entire community of Big Sur and both sides of Hwy 1 from Lime Kiln State Park north to Andrew Molera State Park. The evacuation in Big Sur has displaced 1500 residents and affected 500 homes and 20 businesses. Evacuations are still in place in the Partington Ridge area. An evacuation advisory is in place for residents of the Palo Colorado Canyon area. East Zone reports ongoing preparations for structure protection in the Cachagua areas.

On July 4, the fire continues to be very active on the northwestern and southern flanks, threatening the communities of BIG SUR, CARMEL and LUCIA. Fire has jumped southern containment line and crews are attempting to hold a secondary dozer line with limited resources.

By July 11, with Red Flag Warning for the area expiring this morning, increased humidity allows firing operations on the north containment line from Big Pines to continue. The Basin Complex is at 113,827 acres and 41 percent contained. Twenty-six residences and 32 outbuildings are destroyed. Five residences and 4 outbuildings are damaged.

As crews complete burning operations and mop up around Arroyo Seco area between the Indians and East Basin fire perimeters, voluntary evacuations for many residents are lifted. On July 25, USFS Chief Abigail Kimbell visits the East Zone of Basin Complex. The complex has burned 162,818 acres making it the 7th largest fire in California’s recorded history starting in 1932.

# Overflow: Complexes

## Canyon Complex

Fire also had significant fire spread. Evacuations are issued for an 8 square mile area including a mandatory evacuation for Berry Creek and a voluntary evacuation Brush Creek. Shelters are established in Oroville and Chico. Bald Rock Road is closed east of Hwy 119. One residence is destroyed and 1,500 residences, 21 commercial properties, and 9 outbuildings are threatened.

By July 10 the Canyon Complex reaches 25,019 acres and 57% containment. Under Red Flag Warnings uncontained fires are active and spreading outside portions of their perimeters. The Scotch Fire produces several large columns. Two outbuildings are reported destroyed and 1,500 residences, 15 commercial properties, and 850 outbuildings remain threatened. Evacuations are in effect east and south of Lake Madrone, and north and south of Bald Rock Road. Bald Rock Road east of Hwy 119 and Hwy 70 east of Belden to SR89 are closed.

Moderate weather conditions temper fire behavior by July 14. The Canyon Complex (the Belden Fire is moved to the Butte Complex) was at 31,326 acres and 61% containment. Residents return to homes in the Berry Creek area, Highway 70 re-opens with a pilot car directing travelers, and the Cold Fire is contained. Priority fires are Friend-Darnell (3,871 acres; 75% contained), South-Frey (11,678 acres; 65% contained), Scotch (5042 acres; 5% contained), Belden (478 acres), and Little (897 acres; 30% contained).

By July 24, the Belden and Frey Fires are delegated back to the Butte Complex, and the Canyon Complex is at 37,753 acres and 90% containment. The complex remains uncontained into September due to active fire in steep, inaccessible terrain.

## North Mountain Fire

**Fatalities:** 0

**Fuels:** Chaparral, Heavy Brush and Timber

**Cause:** Lightning

By July 2nd, with the aid of four Marine CH 46 Helicopters, North Mountain Fire was 90% contained and 2,711 acres. The North Mountain Fire was 100% contained on July 4, 2008.

# Overflow: Complexes

## Piute Fire

1,633

Structures Destroyed: 6  
residences, 45 outbuildings

Structures Damaged: 0

Fatalities: 0

Fuels: Timber, brush and grass

Cause: Lightning

## Quarry Fire

growth, full containment is achieved by June 24th. Burning of interior areas continues to produce smoke and visible flames generating numerous emergency calls for some time.

## Whiskeytown Complex

By July 1, several fires have nearly burned together, forming the Whiskeytown Fire and merging with the Moon Fire in SHU Lightning complex. July 10 the fires are known as the Whiskeytown Complex.

## Wild Fire

fire from burning into the heavily populated Green Valley area. Progress slows on Monday as the lack of reinforcements forces fire fighters to split into two shifts to provide rest.

As the winds die down on Tuesday, hand lines and dozer lines are established around the southwest side of the fire. The Wild Fire is contained on June 25, and all resources redeploy north to the Walker Fire.